

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) A video game device for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said mark being progressively increased in correspondence with a greater the degree of difficulty of the technique;

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with said set degree of difficulty , said series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set,

a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive [[an]] command [[input]] inputs for

causing the play character to perform [[a]] said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the successive command inputs in accordance with the command input guide given said series of commands displayed by the command guiding unit, and

a second operable member, operated by [[a]] the game player, for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in response to operations of said second operable member performed by the game player within a predetermined time period;

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play character in accordance with [[a]] the successive command inputs given by the first operable member.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein the ~~degree of difficulty setting unit includes a mark changing unit for changing mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty by operating is further responsive to a third operable member provided in the operation unit.~~

4. (Original) A video game device according to claim 1, further comprising a landing setting unit for causing the play character to land.

5. (Currently Amended) A video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty of the technique;

a command guiding unit for providing a command input guide guiding the game player in [[an]] command input for causing the play character to perform [[a]] the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty based on the command input executed by the game player, the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the command in accordance with the command input guide given by the command guiding unit, and

a second operable member, operated by [[a]] the game player, for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark larger in response to a greater number of operations of said second operable member performed by the game player within a predetermined time period;

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed in accordance with [[a]] the command given by the first operable member based on correspondence with said command input guide; and

a landing setting unit for causing the play character to land, the landing setting unit setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play character in a partial area of the game screen image, setting a landing success zone in the landing setting display area, displaying a landing mark which is movable, and enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth operable

member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located within the landing success zone.

6. (Original) A video game device according to claim 5, wherein the landing success zone is set narrower as the degree of difficulty is set higher.

7. (Currently Amended) A video game device according to claim 5, wherein a command input area is set in a partial area of the game screen image, and the command input guide is displayed in the input area in the form of icons.

8. (Currently Amended) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein a higher evaluation is given as a shorter time is required by the game player to input the successive command inputs.

9. (Currently Amended) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein when the input of the successive command inputs is not completed within a predetermined time, the play character is caused to perform an action different from [[the]] one performed when [[it is]] said successive command inputs are completed within the predetermined time.

10. (Original) A video game device according to claim 1, wherein the play character is caused to perform a complicated technique when the set degree of difficulty is high.

11. (Currently Amended) A technique setting method for setting a technique in a video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the method comprising the steps of:

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a degree of difficulty of the technique in response to a game player input;

setting [[a]] the degree of difficulty of [[a]] the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with a size of the mark;

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a greater the degree of difficulty of the technique;

guiding an inputting operation of a command for causing the play character to perform a technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

evaluating the technique performed by inputting the command in accordance with the guide through operation of a first operable member; and

wherein progressively increasing the size of the mark includes setting the size of said mark larger in response to a greater number of operations of a second operable member by the game player within a predetermined time period to indicate the degree of difficulty is greater.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A technique setting method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of changing [[a]] said mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty through operation of a third operable member in conjunction with said second operational member.

14. (Original) A technique setting method according to claim 11, further comprising the step of causing the play character to land.

15. (Currently Amended) A technique setting method for setting a technique in a video game for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the method comprising the steps of:

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character;

setting [[a]] the degree of difficulty of [[a]] technique to be performed by the play character to correspond to the size of the mark;

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to the degree of difficulty of the technique;

guiding an inputting operation of a command for causing the play character to perform [[a]] the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

evaluating the technique performed by inputting the command in accordance with the guide through operation of a first operable member;

setting the size of said mark in response to operations of a second operable member by the game player within a predetermined time period;

setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play character in a partial area of the game screen image;

setting a landing success zone in the landing setting display area;

displaying a landing mark which is movable;

enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth operable member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located within the landing success zone; and

causing the play character to land.

16. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium storing a technique setting program in a video game for displaying a play character in a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the technique setting program comprising the steps of:

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a degree of difficulty of the technique in response to a game player input;

setting [[a]] the degree of difficulty of [[a]] the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with a size of the mark;

progressively increasing a size of a mark in correspondence with a greater the degree of difficulty of the technique;

guiding an inputting operation of a series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player command for causing the play character to perform a technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

receiving said successive command inputs from a first operable member operated by the game player and controlling the play character throughout the technique based on correspondence of said successive command inputs with said series of commands;

evaluating the technique performed by the play character in response to the inputting of the successive command inputs based on correspondence of said successive command inputs with said series of commands in accordance with the guide through operation of a first operable member; and

setting the size of said mark in response to the game player input being a number of operations of a second operable member by the game player within a predetermined time period.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the technique setting program further comprising comprises a step of changing [[a]] the mark corresponding to the degree of difficulty through further operation of a third operable member.

19. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the technique setting program further comprising comprises the step of causing the play character to land.

20. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium storing a technique setting program in a video game for displaying a play character in a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty and prepared in advance by operating an operation unit, the technique setting program comprising the steps of:

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to the degree of difficulty of a technique in response to a game player input;

setting a degree of difficulty of [[a]] the technique to be performed by the play character in correspondence with the size of the mark;

changing a size of a mark in a manner corresponding to the degree of difficulty of the technique;

guiding an inputting operation of a series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player command for causing the play character to perform [[a]] the technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

receiving said successive command inputs from a first operable member operated by the game player and controlling the play character throughout the technique based on correspondence of said successive command inputs with said series of commands;

evaluating the technique performed by the play character in response to the inputting of the successive command inputs based on correspondence of said successive command inputs with said series of commands in accordance with the guide through operation of a first operable member;

setting the size of said mark in response to a number of operations of a second operable member by the game player within a predetermined time period;

setting a landing setting display area for setting the landing of the play character in a partial area of the game screen image;

setting a landing success zone in the landing setting display area;

displaying a landing mark which is movable;

enabling landing of the play character through operation of a fourth operable member provided in the operation unit when the landing mark is located within the landing success zone; and

causing the play character to land.

21. (Original) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 20, wherein the landing success zone is set narrower as the degree of difficulty is set higher.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the guiding is conducted in a command input area [[is]] set in a partial area of the game screen image, and the series of commands command is displayed in the input area in the form of icons.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein a higher evaluation is given as a shorter time is required to input the successive command inputs command.

24. (Currently Amended) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein, when the input of the successive command inputs is not completed within [[the]] a predetermined time, the play character is caused to perform an action different from [[the]] one performed when [[it is]] said successive command inputs are completed within the predetermined time.

25. (Original) A computer readable recording medium according to claim 16, wherein the play character is caused to perform a complicated technique when the set degree of difficulty is high.

26. (Currently Amended) A video game device for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size of said mark being progressively increased in correspondence with a greater the degree of difficulty of the technique;

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with said set degree of difficulty , said series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set,

a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive [[an]] command [[input]] inputs for causing the play character to perform [[a]] said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty,

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive

command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique,  
the operation unit including:

    a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting  
    the successive command inputs in accordance with the command input  
    guide given said series of commands displayed by the command guiding  
    unit, and

    a second operable member, operated by [[a]] the game player, for  
    causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in response to  
    operations of said second operable member performed by the game player  
    within a predetermined time period;

    an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play  
character in accordance with [[a]] the successive command inputs given by the first  
operable member.

27. (Previously presented) The video game device according to claim 1,  
wherein said mark changing unit changes the size of the mark in accordance with  
the number of operations of the second operable member performed by the game  
player within the predetermined time period.

28. (Currently Amended) The video game device according to claim 27, wherein said size of the mark grows as the number of operations of the second operable member increases and said command guiding unit displays on the game screen image a series of command inputs to be sequentially followed by the game player for the player character to perform a technique in accordance with the size of the mark.

29. (Currently Amended) The video game device according to claim 27, wherein said second operable member is comprised of two operable buttons and the degree of difficulty of the technique to be performed by the player play character is increased as the number of alternative on-and-off operations of the two operable buttons increases within the predetermined time period.

30. (Previously Presented) A video game device for displaying a play character on a game screen image displayed on a monitor and causing the play character to perform a plurality of techniques having different degrees of difficulty, comprising:

a degree of difficulty setting unit for setting a degree of difficulty of a technique to be performed by the play character, said degree of difficulty setting unit including a mark changing unit for changing a size of a mark, said size thereof

corresponding to the degree of difficulty in such a manner that the larger the size thereof the higher the level of difficulty is;

~~a command setting unit for setting a command to be followed by a game player in accordance with the set degree of difficulty,~~

a command setting unit for setting a series of commands in accordance with said set degree of difficulty , said series of commands requiring corresponding successive command inputs by the game player to guide the play character throughout the technique corresponding to the degree of difficulty set;

a command guiding unit for guiding the game player, by displaying said series of commands, to input said successive [[an]] command [[input]] inputs for causing the play character to perform [[a]] said technique corresponding to the set degree of difficulty;

an operation unit for causing the play character to perform the technique according to the set degree of difficulty in accordance with said successive command inputs input by the game player throughout execution of said technique,  
the operation unit including:

a first operable member, operated by the game player, for inputting the successive command inputs in accordance with the command input guide given said series of commands displayed by the command guiding unit, and

an a second operable member, operated by [[a]] the game player, for causing said mark changing unit to set the size of said mark in response to the operations thereof performed by [[a]] the game player within a predetermined time period [[in]] such that as a number of operations performed by the game player within the predetermined time period increases, the degree of difficulty set increases to a higher level; and

an evaluating unit for evaluating the technique performed by the play character in accordance with [[a]] the successive command inputs given by the first operable member.